

Tribute to Israel Evans
Son of David Evans.
Father of the Co-operative Movement

One of the men that are overlooked in Lehi and Utah History is the role of Israel Evans. His role in shaping Lehi, Mormon and Utah History has long been overlooked.

Israel Evans was the founding father of the Co-operative Idea in Utah.

In 1853-57, Israel Evans served an LDS mission in England. While there he visited an early co-operative in Rochdale, England. There he learned how a co-operative works.

When he returned, he explained the idea to his father David Evans. His father encouraged him and they felt that the Co-operative idea would work in Lehi.

In 1868, Israel Evans with the power of Bishop David Evans, established and capitalized the Lehi Union Exchange. It was owned by the Mormon Church in Lehi. The people could exchange their produce for store goods. The Lehi Union Exchange was so successful, it ran most of the other merchants out of business.

The Lehi Union Exchange was located in the spot of Colonial House at 181-189 West Main.

Brigham Young spotlighted the Lehi Union Exchange in his 07 April 1869 General Conference talk.

This was the beginning of the ZCMI movement. Colonial House has a plaque honoring the first ZCMI in Utah.

The Co-operative movement transpired in almost every Mormon community in the intermountain West. It came about because of an important Lehi boy.

Lehi Union Exchange was bought out in 1880, by the People's Co-operative which also became associated with ZCMI.

Yes it was our local boy, Israel Evans whose vision as a missionary in the early days of Lehi brought change to every Mormon community in the Territory of Deseret.